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National Intelligence Daily (Cable)

27 January 1979

Top Secret

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SITUATION REPORTS

IRAN

Prime Minister Bakhtiar's new, harder line is probably intended as a show of force to the opposition to pressure Ayatollah Khomeini into some concessions. Bakhtiar doubtless is being encouraged by the military to pursue this line. The ban on demonstrations has resulted in the worst violence in Tehran since the Shah left Iran. [redacted]

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Bakhtiar in the last week has taken numerous measures to demonstrate his resolve, including:

- Arresting dissident journalists.
- Reforming and reconstituting SAVAK.
- Rallying his own supporters.
- Ordering the military to be more aggressive. [redacted]

Soldiers opened fire on antigovernment demonstrators in Tehran, Sanandaj, and Tabriz yesterday. A mass demonstration is scheduled for today in Tehran to mark the anniversary of the Prophet Mohammad's death and protest the delay in Khomeini's homecoming. The government has granted permission for the demonstration. [redacted]

Bakhtiar must carefully avoid overplaying his hand in the next few days. He clearly recognizes that his get-tough tactics may lead to even more widespread violence. Large-scale bloodshed could cow some in the opposition but will not break Khomeini's hardcore followers. [redacted]

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If Bakhtiar continues to bar Khomeini's return, Khomeini will probably stand by his well-established strategy of gradually wearing down the government and the military with demonstrations and strikes. The

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loyalty and cohesion of the military continues to weaken-- several hundred Air Force personnel joined a pro-Khomeini demonstration in Esfahan yesterday. [Redacted]

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Foreign Policy

//Since assuming power earlier this month, Bakhtiar has moved rapidly to distance himself from the unpopular elements of the Shah's foreign policy. Bakhtiar has:

- Ordered the withdrawal of Iran's troops in Oman; the Omani Foreign Minister says they will leave within a month.
- Promised to cease all oil exports to Israel and South Africa.
- Promised to end military cooperation with CENTO.
- Replaced many of Iran's ambassadors abroad.//

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25X1 We expect Bakhtiar will continue to move Iran toward a nonaligned foreign policy under pressure from his domestic foes. He will keep open Iran's ties to the 25X1 West but is likely to follow a more independent course.
[Redacted]

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ALGERIA: Presidential Selection Process Begins

//Algeria's only political party, the National Liberation Front, meets today to begin the formal process of nominating a successor to President Boumediene. The choice in fact has probably already been made by the eight-man National Council of the Revolution--the collegial body that has ruled Algeria since Boumediene became incapacitated--in consultation with key army officers. The selection will be rubber-stamped in due course by the party congress.//

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No front-runner for president is discernible. The power brokers may have reached an impasse over the selection of one of the prominent candidates, which may have led them to choose a lesser known figure outside the regime's inner circle.

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//Informed speculation since Boumediene's death has focused on five Council members: party chief Yahiaoui, Foreign Minister Bouteflika, Interior Minister Abdelghani, former gendarmerie commander Colonel Bencherif, and 2nd Military Region Commander Colonel Bendjedid.

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//To lend an aura of popular participation to the nomination process, representatives to the Congress have been drawn from a broad spectrum of Algerian society. The main task of the opening plenary session--the first in 14 years--is to reconstitute the defunct national party organization. A caucus restricted to middle- and senior-level party officials will then formally nominate the presidential candidate whose man-date will be confirmed on 7 February in a general election.//

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RHODESIA: Auxiliary Forces

Chief Chirau, one of the black coleaders in Rhodesia's transitional government, has threatened to boycott the national election in April if the two other black leaders in the Executive Council do not disband their auxiliary forces. The auxiliaries, composed mostly of former guerrillas who have accepted the government's amnesty program, have also become controversial among whites who question their loyalty and the military's ability to control their activities.

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As the election approaches, however, the temptation for Muzorewa and Sithole to use the auxiliary forces to carve out political feifdoms and intimidate voters in the countryside will grow stronger.

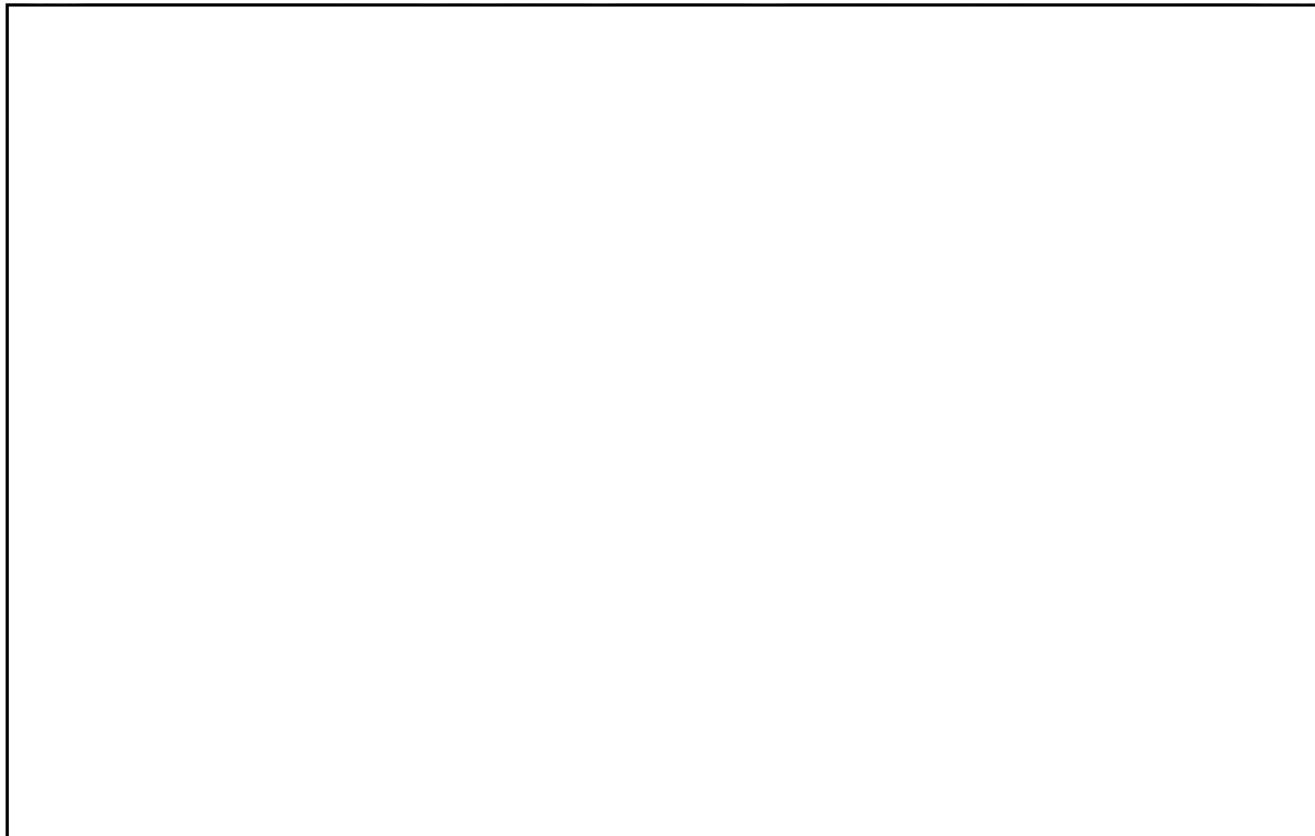
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Chirau has no auxiliaries of his own and he, along with many whites, is seriously disturbed by the threat the auxiliary forces could pose to the credibility of the national election. In addition, Chirau wants to use the auxiliaries issue to offset the image he has gained as a surrogate for Prime Minister Smith among Rhodesia's conservative blacks.

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TURKEY: Cabinet Shakeup

//Prime Minister Ecevit's success this week in preventing two more cabinet members from resigning shows that he remains in control of the government despite continued dissension within his Republican People's Party. Resignations tendered by the Finance and Justice Ministers on Tuesday came on the heels of decisions by the Interior and Defense Ministers to quit earlier this month. It seems clear, however, that the time of reckoning has been merely postponed.

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[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted] A major shakeup of the cabinet in early March seems increasingly likely as Ecevit strives to balance factional pressures within his party.// [Redacted]

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SPECIAL ANALYSIS

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RHODESIA: White Referendum

Prime Minister Smith is conducting a vigorous campaign to ensure a positive vote on the regime's proposed majority-rule constitution in the all-white referendum to be held Tuesday. The constitution has come under strong attack from several small white political groups, but Smith still has the support of most whites and the proposed constitution is likely to be approved by a comfortable majority. [redacted]

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Smith has been barnstorming the country, particularly the rural areas, telling whites that a "yes" vote is their only rational choice. He concedes that the constitution is not ideal, but argues that "it is the best that we can get under the circumstances." He told a white audience in Umtali this month that it has no choice but to make a settlement for majority rule and that talk of winning the war is "absolute pie in the sky." [redacted]

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Smith also has intimated that the West, especially the US, will recognize a multiracial government elected under this constitution. White Cominister for Foreign Affairs Van der Byl emphasized this last week, saying the Rhodesian Government has given up on the UK and will now devote its efforts to seeking a better understanding with political leaders in the US. [redacted]

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The proposed charter would give the whites more power than was envisaged in the internal settlement agreement reached last March. It assures them of retaining 28 of the 100 seats in the lower house of the legislature, a third of the upper house seats, a number of cabinet posts, and a key role in the armed forces, police, and judiciary. [redacted]

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The White Opposition

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The most outspoken opponent of the proposed constitution is a newly formed right-wing group, "Save Our Nation." In a series of public broadcasts, it has been urging whites to vote "no" because approval of the constitution would not bring international recognition, the lifting of sanctions, or an end to the war. The group draws most of its members from a small, ineffective right-wing party, the Rhodesia Movement, and is actively supported by the South Africa-based "Save Rhodesia" movement. The Rhodesia Movement has long advocated dividing the country into Shoma, Ndebele, and white states united under a federal system of government and run by a Council of State composed of four representatives from each state. [redacted]

Spokesmen from "Save our Nation" have been telling whites that the South African military will come to their assistance in the struggle against the guerrillas if the constitution is defeated. Some Rhodesia Movement leaders have recently approached the South Africans to seek political backing and military assistance. [redacted]

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Smith has also come under attack from the "Rhodesia First Campaign," a front for the Rhodesian Action Party and another extreme right-wing group. The organization preaches white hegemony and the total suppression of the guerrillas and their supporters inside the country. It enjoys little popular support and does not pose a serious threat to the Smith government. [redacted]

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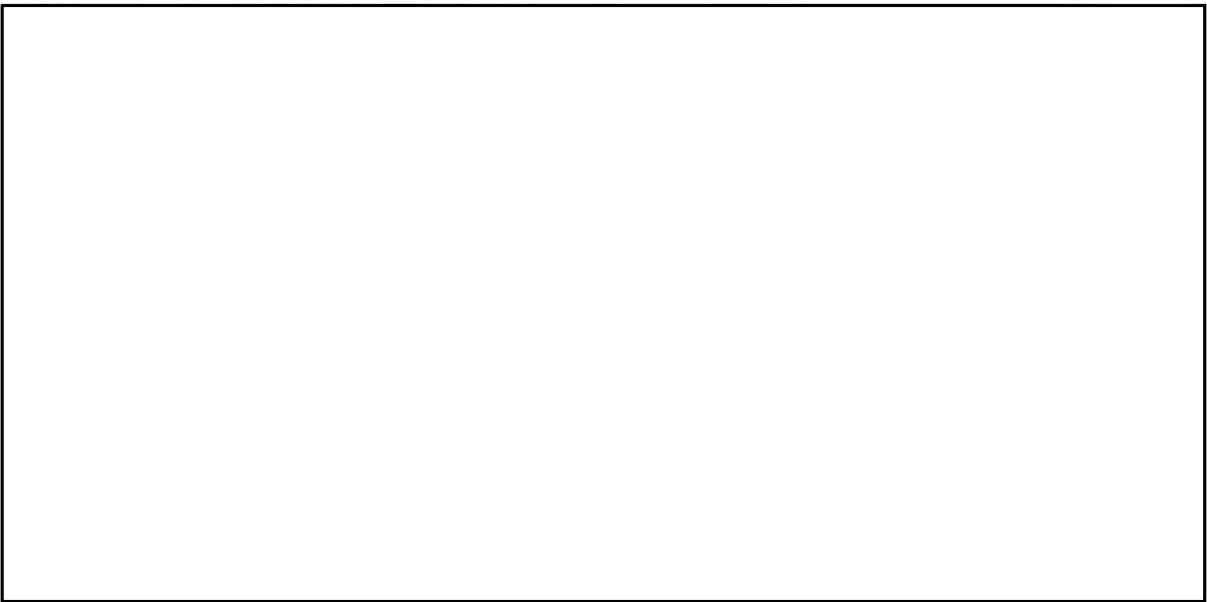
The National Unifying Force, a liberal group, has also come out against the constitution, urging a "return to legality" under British rule and the convening of an all-parties conference under the auspices of the Anglo-American plan for a Rhodesian settlement. Leaders of the group are ambivalent about the constitution and are urging whites to abstain from voting; they believe a "no" vote might wreck the chances for any form of black rule while a "yes" vote would give approval to a constitution that would perpetuate white domination over blacks. The group exerts little influence in the white community. [redacted]

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USSR-Italy

The bland communique issued yesterday at the conclusion of Foreign Minister Gromyko's visit to Italy contained generalized positive references to several arms control talks currently in progress. Pro forma references were made to President Brezhnev and Premier Kosygin accepting standing invitations to visit Italy at dates yet to be determined.

COMMENT: *Gromyko's visit was not expected to be dominated by significant issues, and the talks probably did not go nearly so well as the communique would imply.*



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